



# MARY LOU DICKERSON

State Representative • 36th Legislative District



## Issue Focus: The Energy and Water Crises

Congratulations, Seattle!

Smart conservation by Seattle's families and businesses is helping to prevent the energy crisis and drought from becoming major disasters.

- So far this year, Seattle residents have saved enough energy to power more than 35,000 homes for an entire year – saving our city more than \$65 million in power purchases.
- Water-conservation since April has reduced water use by 11 percent – exceeding the 10 percent goal and saving Seattle more than 13 *million* gallons of water per day.
- State agencies have reduced power consumption by 10 percent and natural gas consumption by more than 20 percent.

According to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), the tremendous energy savings achieved by Seattle and the Northwest will hold wholesale-electricity price increases to less than one-fifth of the 250 percent increases that were expected just months ago. This will save the Northwest up to 25,000 jobs and \$4 billion in energy costs!

According to the director of the BPA, these impressive energy savings "should make us all proud to be citizens of the Pacific Northwest." I wholeheartedly agree.

There is still a risk of short energy supplies due to the drought, so it is very important that conservation efforts continue. Tips such as those in this newsletter can help save you money while conserving valuable resources for our city and state.

But it is also important to recognize that conservation works, and that Seattle and the Northwest have achieved a remarkable success. We all have a right to say: Congratulations, Seattle!

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Dickerson

### Committees

Juvenile Justice, Co-chair  
Children & Family Services  
Judiciary

### Olympia Office

412 Legislative Building  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

### Toll-free Legislative Hotline

1-800-562-6000

### TDD (for hearing impaired)

1-800-635-9993

### E-mail

dickerso\_ma@leg.wa.gov

### The Legislature's Internet Home Page

<http://www.leg.wa.gov>

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## The Energy Crisis: what happened?

Seattle City Light just raised electric rates for the third time this year, and a fourth increase will probably be needed in October to repay debts incurred earlier this year. People throughout the west have been hurt by soaring energy prices. What caused this crisis?

California's energy-deregulation fiasco and a record drought that severely restricted hydro-power are partly responsible. But much of the price crisis is due to out-of-state corporations who greedily exploited the broken energy market to charge up to \$3,000 for wholesale energy that cost less than \$30 in 1999.

Seattle City Light estimates it has paid \$222 *million* above "just and reasonable" market rates for wholesale power. Much of this damage could have been avoided if federal regulators had promptly enforced the law that *requires* energy prices to be "just and reasonable." Unfortunately, federal officials waited until June to intervene.

**Seattle deserves refunds for unjust energy overcharges! I will work with other officials to press for the refunds we deserve.**

Even though wholesale energy prices have improved recently, we clearly must make Washington more energy independent. This was a top priority for the Legislature.



## The energy crisis: The Legislature responds



To make Washington more energy independent, the Legislature united behind a strong, bipartisan energy package that will increase power supplies, make government a leader in energy conservation, and provide urgent help for struggling low-income families.

- Required energy audits and energy efficiencies in state-funded facilities will save an estimated 500 million tax dollars worth of energy over 20 years.
- A public-private partnership that offers utilities a \$1 tax credit for every \$2 of energy assistance provided to low-income seniors and others will help about 11,000 needy families pay power bills without further cutting back on food, medicine and other necessities.
- New pollution-control tax credits will allow some existing power plants to run longer without creating more air pollution.
- A new renewable-power initiative requires utilities to give consumers the choice of buying blocks of power generated by wind, the sun and other environmentally-friendly sources. It also greatly expands tax incentives for renewable power. The consumer "Green Option" will be



***The world's largest wind farm is being built in Washington. Wind power is clean, renewable and offers huge economic opportunities to struggling rural communities.***

# Issue Focus: Energy & Water Crises

available through Seattle City Light on or before Jan. 1.

- Tax credits will help aluminum companies and other huge energy users build on-site power plants. This will help save jobs and make more low-cost BPA power available to families and other businesses.
- Streamlined rules for siting energy facilities will bring more power on-line faster, without sacrificing our clean air and other environmental commitments.

I'm pleased by the Legislature's response to the energy crisis. We united behind strong steps to build energy supplies, but did not allow ourselves to be stampeded into abandoning consumers or our environment.

## Energy-saving tips

Everyone can make a difference by conserving energy. Seattle City Light has a useful Residential Conservation Help Line (684-3800) and web page (<http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/light/conserve/>), which offers good tips such as:



- Switching your dishwasher to "air dry" or simply opening the door shortly after the washing cycle is complete can save 50 percent of the energy your dishwasher uses.
- Microwave ovens use only about one-third the energy of conventional ovens. Toaster ovens, outdoor barbecues and crock pots also save significant energy.
- Compact fluorescent lamps use 75 percent less energy and last 10 times longer than conventional incandescent bulbs.
- A stick of incense held near cracks around doors and windows can detect leaks. Up to 15 percent of the energy you pay for can be lost through these leaks.

- Turning off the computer when you're not using it can save up to \$50 of energy per year. And don't forget to turn off the printer.
- Remember that open fireplace dampers are like open windows.
- Save on cooling costs by closing blinds or curtains before you leave the house in the morning.
- If you want to leave a light on when you're away from home, install a timer, photocell or motion sensor. It's good for home security and conservation too.



***Saving water will help save salmon and allow our great dams to generate larger amounts of clean, low-cost hydropower.***

## Water-saving tips

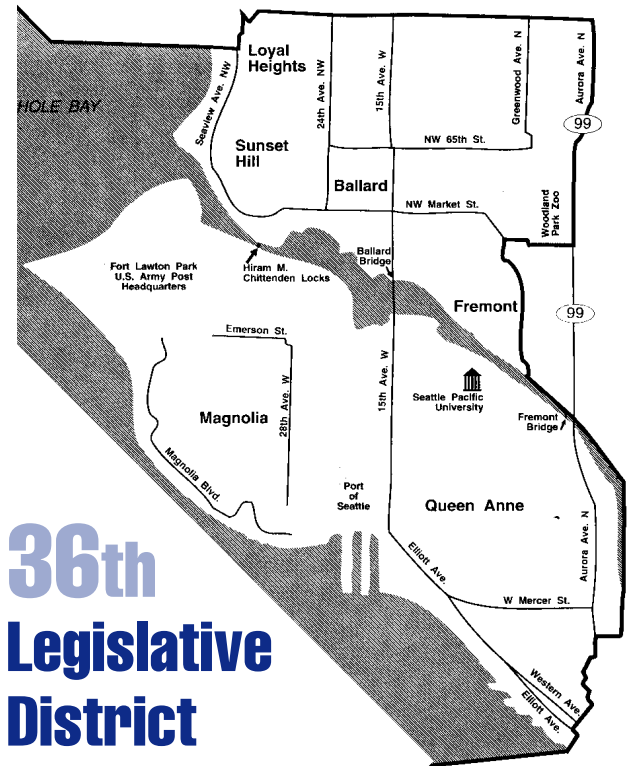
Help us beat the drought! Saving water saves money, jobs, salmon and energy. Seattle Public Utilities offers super tips on saving water through its Water Conservation Hotline (684-7283) and web page ([www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org)). Good ideas include:

- Use drip irrigation to save from 25 to 70 percent of garden water usage. Better yet, consider hooking up a soaker hose to a rain barrel. I've done it, and it works great.

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## Water-saving tips...continued

- Watering lawns in the evening or early morning prevents losing up to half your water to evaporation.
- Spend one minute less in the shower. If everyone did, it would save Seattle more than 2.5 million gallons of water *per day*. If everyone flushed just one less time per day it would save Seattle more than three million gallons per day.
- Fix dripping faucets. A single faucet that drips one drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year!
- Turning off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving can save more than 5 gallons per day.
- Taking a quick shower rather than a bath saves an average of 20 gallons of water.



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**Issue Focus:**  
**The Energy Crisis**



**Representative**  
**MARY LOU DICKERSON**  
Legislative Office Building #412  
P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

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